



Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.

California Secretary of State

Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment

1500 11th Street, 6th Floor | Sacramento, CA 95814 | 916.695.1680 | votingsystems@sos.ca.gov

August 13, 2026

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #26209

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Rodney Rodriguez
Information Technology Supervisor II, OVSTA

RE: General Election: Ballot Tint and Watermark
Assignment

Pursuant to Elections Code section 13002 and the California Code of Regulations, Title 2, sections 20215, 20218, and 20280, the Secretary of State's office has selected a design and color combination for use in the November 3, 2026, General Election.

The watermark for the November 3, 2026, General Election is the **CA Flag**. The tint for the background and watermark is **PMS 730 U "Dark Brown"** (RGB 166, 128, 99 /CMYK 0, 23, 40, 35).

The watermark and tint must appear on the ballot itself, not only on the stub.

Please note that for "color-on-color" combinations, the tint value for the background should produce a light tint. The watermark should be clearly visible and distinct from the background. The screen percentages for the watermark should be such that the outline is darker than the background and the interior area of the watermark is lighter than the background.

As a reminder, any jurisdiction wishing to purchase ballot cards from a ballot printer shall request in writing a ballot release from the Secretary of State per the California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Division 7, Chapter 4, Article 4, sections [20233](#) and [20234](#). To request a ballot release number, email the Secretary of State's office at BallotRelease@sos.ca.gov. Attached below is the Ballot Release Form for use when requesting a ballot release number.

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If you have any questions or need additional tint and watermarks for local elections, please feel free to contact the Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment (OVSTA) staff at VotingSystems@sos.ca.gov or (916) 695-1680.

**Secretary of State Elections Division
Request for Ballot Card Release**

State Release #: _____
Date Issued: _____

REQUESTER INFORMATION

Agency: _____
Contact: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Address: _____

BALLOT PRINTER INFORMATION

Name: _____
Contact: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

ELECTION INFORMATION

Name: _____
Date: _____

REMINDERS –

1. A Ballot Card Accounting Record shall be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 20235.
2. A Warehouse Inventory Control Record shall be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 20236.
3. A Ballot Scrap and Destruction Report shall be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 20238.
4. Please provide the Secretary of State with one unused official voided/test ballot (one for each color in primaries) of any precinct ballot, vote by mail ballot, and federal overseas voter ballot (when appropriate), for the ballot release indicated above.

BALLOT CARD RELEASE REQUEST

ACTIVITY REPORT (*SOS Use Only)

Sheet Dimension	Tint	Watermark	Format	Quantity Requested		Quantity Shipped* (Vendor)	Quantity Spoiled* (Vendor)	Quantity Received* (Requester)	Date Received* (Requester)	Date Reported*

SOS Contact: Office of Voting Systems and Technology Assessment (OVSTA), Phone: (916) 695-1680 ,
Email: BallotRelease@sos.ca.gov, Mail: Executive Office – 6th Floor, 1500 11th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Instructions:

A Secretary of State Request for Ballot Card Release form must be completed for all ballot release number requests. Submissions using other forms may be rejected, which may result in a delay of the processing time.

- Requests will be accepted by mail to OVSTA, Executive Office— 6th Floor, 1500 11th Street, Sacramento CA 95814, or by e-mail to BallotRelease@sos.ca.gov.
- Once the submitted information is verified, a ballot release number will be assigned, the release number will be added to the top of the form and returned via email to both the Requestor and Vendor.
- A Ballot Card Accounting Record shall be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 20235.
- A Warehouse Inventory Control Record shall be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 20236.
- A Ballot Scrap and Destruction Report shall be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 20238.
- Please provide the Secretary of State with one unused official voided/test ballot (one for each color in primaries) of any precinct ballot, vote by mail ballot, and federal overseas voter ballot (when appropriate), for the ballot release indicated above.